

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please CANCEL claims 1, 3, 11, 12, and 14 without prejudice to or disclaimer of their subject matter. Please AMEND claims 2, 4, 5, 7-10, and 13, as follows.

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding apparatus for containing sheets in an inside thereof, comprising: according to claim 1,

a first cover and a second cover provided in an apparatus main body so as to be openable and closable; and

a detecting sensor for detecting an opening or a closing of the first cover;

wherein said detecting sensor does not detect the closing of the first cover when the first cover is closed in a state in which the second cover is opened and detects the closing of the first cover when the first cover is closed in a state in which the second cover is closed, and

wherein the detecting sensor is provided movably, and moves in a non-detection position where the closing of the first cover is not detected, according to an opening of the second cover, and moves to a detection position where the closing of the first cover can be detected, according to the closing of the second cover.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding apparatus according to claim 2 3, wherein when the second cover is opened after the first cover is opened, the moving member moves to a third position where the detecting sensor does not detect the closing of the first cover from the second position, when the second cover is closed, the moving member moves from the third position to the second position and, even if the first cover is closed when the moving member is in the third position, the moving member does not move to the first position.

5. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding apparatus according to claim 2 3, further comprising:

sheet supporting means which supports sheets and is capable of being raised and lowered;

a drive motor which generates a drive force for raising the sheet supporting means; and

a gear train for transmitting the drive force of the drive motor to the sheet supporting means,

wherein gears of the gear train are disengaged according to a movement of the moving member from the first position to the second position to lower the sheet supporting means.

6. (Original) A sheet feeding apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising:

sheet supporting means which supports sheets and is capable of being raised and lowered;

a drive motor which generates a drive force for raising the sheet supporting means; and

a gear train for transmitting the drive force of the drive motor to the sheet supporting means,

wherein it is possible to disengage gears of the gear train following the movement of the moving member to lower the sheet supporting means,

when the moving member is in the first position, the gears of the gear train engage with each other, and

when the moving member is in the second position and the third position, the gears of the gear train are disengaged and the sheet supporting means falls.

7. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding apparatus according to claim 2 [†], further comprising an indication member which is provided movably in the first cover and indicates that the first cover is closed earlier than the second cover,

wherein, when the first cover is closed in a state in which the second cover is not closed, the indication member moves to a position for indicating that the first cover is closed earlier than the second cover.

8. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding apparatus according to claim 2 [†], further comprising:

sheet supporting means which supports sheets contained in the inside of the apparatus main body;

sheet feeding means which feeds the sheets supported by the sheet supporting means; and

elevating means which raises and lowers the sheet supporting means,

wherein, when the detecting sensor detects the closing of the first cover, the sheet supporting means maintains a height for allowing sheet feeding, and

when the detecting sensor detects that the first cover is opened, the sheet supporting means is lowered to a lowermost part.

9. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding apparatus according to claim 2 †, further comprising regulating means which is capable of regulating an opening operation of the second cover in a state in which the second cover is closed,

wherein the regulating means operates in association with the opening or the closing operation of the first cover,

in a state in which the first cover is closed, the regulating member regulates the opening operation of the second cover, and

in a state in which the first cover is opened, the regulating means does not regulating the opening or the closing operation of the second cover.

10. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding apparatus according to claim 2 †, further comprising:

sheet supporting means which supports sheets and is capable of being raised and lowered;

a drive motor which generates a drive force for raising the sheet supporting means; and

a gear train for transmitting the drive force of the drive motor to the sheet supporting means,

wherein the sheet supporting means falls due to its own weight as gears of the gear train are disengaged according to an opening operation of the first cover, and

even if the first cover is closed in a state in which the second cover is opened, a state in which the gears of the gear train are disengaged by the opening operation is maintained.

11-12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding apparatus for containing sheets in the inside thereof, comprising: according to claim 12, further comprising:

a first cover and a second cover which are which are provided in an apparatus main body so as to be openable and closable;

a moving member which moves following an opening or a closing operation of one of the first cover and the second cover;

a detecting sensor which is provided in the apparatus main body and turned ON or OFF by the moving member,

wherein, when the second cover is closed, the moving member is moved to a position where the closing of the first cover can be detected by the detecting sensor, and

when the second cover is opened, the moving member is moved to a position where the closing of the first cover is not detected by the detecting sensor,

sheet supporting means which supports sheets and is capable of being raised and lowered;

a drive motor which generates a drive force for raising the sheet supporting means; and

a gear train for transmitting the drive force of the drive motor to the sheet supporting means,

wherein it is possible to disengage gears of the gear train following movement of the moving member to lower the sheet supporting means,

the moving member is movable to a first position where the detecting sensor detects the closing of the first cover and a second position where the detecting sensor does not detect the closing of the first cover and, in a state in which the second cover is closed, the moving member moves from the first position to the second position following the opening of the first cover and moves from the second position to the first position following the closing of the first cover,

when the second cover is opened after the first cover is opened, the moving member moves to a third position where the detecting sensor does not detect the closing of the first cover from the second position, when the second cover is closed, the moving member moves

from the third position to the second position and, even if the first cover is closed when the moving member is in the third position, the moving member does not move to the first position,

when the moving member is in the first position, the gears of the gear train engage with each other, and

when the moving member is in the second position and the third position, the gears of the gear train are disengaged and the sheet supporting means falls.

14. (Cancelled)